

Abstract 584

TITLE: Comparison of the Effectiveness of a School-Based, HIV Behavioral Intervention Targeting Urban, Middle and High School Students

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ISSUE: As of December 1998, African and Latino adolescents comprise 59% of the reported cases of AIDS among adolescents and young adults 13 to 29 years of age. Every year, approximately 3 million adolescents acquire an STI, with gonorrhea and chlamydia being the two most commonly diagnosed STI among adolescents. SCYFC is headquartered in California within Los Angeles County Supervisorial District 2, which has the highest percentage of youth (21%) between the ages of 13 and 19 years living with HIV disease, and the second and fifth highest rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia, respectively, across the 23 LA County health districts.

SETTING: 183 students, ages 12-18 years, attending health science classes at middle and high school located in the cities of Hawthorne and Culver City within the County of Los Angeles, California.

PROJECT: Project SKILLS (*Securing Knowledge in Life, Learning and Safety*) is a CDC-funded, five-session, classroom-based, behavioral intervention, with a 2-month follow-up, designed to effect knowledge and behavioral changes among African-American and Latino adolescents necessary for reducing their risks for HIV/AIDS. Using ETR's *Reducing the Risk* curriculum, youth are presented with education and skills-building exercises on reproductive anatomy and physiology, contraception, HIV transmission, prevention and protection, STI transmission, prevention and treatment, self-esteem relationships, communication and refusal skills. The effectiveness of the intervention is measured by comparing pretest and posttest measures of KABBs. To evaluate the maintenance of behavioral changes, a survey with repeated measures is administered at 2-month follow-up, and these data are compared with posttest data. Students were asked to select from 13 options the methods(s) they would employ to reduce their risks for HIV/AIDS/STIs.

RESULTS: Preliminary comparison analyses of 183 surveys show that, at pretest, the two most frequently chosen risk reduction methods were abstinence (57%) and condoms (22%). At posttest, abstinence and condom use were again the two most frequently selected methods at 71 % and 42%, respectively. Subgroup analyses for gender, race, and age will be performed on the entire sample of approximately 750 youth.

LESSONSLEARNED: Youth demonstrated a 14% and 20% increase in their intentions to practice abstinence and condom use, respectively. These two methods represent the two most highly effective risk-reduction behaviors for the prevention of infection with HIV/AIDS/STIs. The data support the value and impact of school-based behavioral interventions as a strategy to effect the incorporation of HIV/AIDS/STI protective behaviors among high-risk youth.

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